

STATUS

Claims 1-32 are pending in the application and have been rejected.

Claims 7-11, 13, 14, 21-25, 27, and 28 have been objected to.

Claims 1-28 have been rejected under 35 USC 112 for an antecedent basis issue.

Claims 1-5, 12, 15-19, and 26 have been rejected under 35 USC 102(b).

Claims 6 and 20 have been rejected under 35 USC 103(a).

Claims 7-11, 13, 14, 21-25, 27, and 28 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the objection under 35 USC 112 and to include all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

EXTENSION OF TIME

A separate petition for an extension of time of three (3) months to respond to 18 February 2004 to respond to the outstanding Office Action, along with the appropriate fee for a large entity of \$950.00, is enclosed.

EXCESS CLAIMS FEE

This response has resulted in the addition of 3 new independent claims and 9 new total claims, and the excess claims fee for a large entity of \$420.00 is enclosed.